

## CARBON COUNTY (UTAH). COMMISSION <sup>[1515]</sup> MINUTES, 1894#

**DESCRIPTION:** These minute books record the actions of the county commission, the governing body of the county. The commission (known during the territorial period as the county court) was authorized to manage all county business and property. This includes budgeting, equipment purchasing, and auditing; use of county lands; districting for schools, roads, voting, drainage, etc.; taxing, specifically acting as an ex-officio board of equalization; business licensing; arranging for the construction of roads, public buildings, etc.; contracting for services; supervising the conduct and payment of all county personnel; providing for basic health care, public safety, and care of the indigent; canvassing election returns and appointing certain officials; and incorporating municipalities. All these activities are noted in the minutes. The day's entries are prefaced by the date, names of those present, and where and when they met.

Following the formation of territorial government, the legislature in 1852 passed acts relating to the formation and government of counties. There were no county commissions, but the probate judge in conjunction with the county selectmen were invested "with the usual powers and jurisdiction of County Commissioners" and as such were known as the county court. The probate court clerk (also known as the county clerk) was to keep the records of the court. This pattern was followed when Carbon County was created by the territorial legislature in March 1894 and organized in June 1894. With statehood in 1896 an actual board of county commissioners was created. The probate judge was removed, but the selectmen continued serving as commissioners until elections were held. The county clerk remained the clerk of the board, recording the minutes.

The commission, and earlier the court, was authorized to manage all county business and county property. This included auditing all claims against the county and payments by the treasurer. Bids received, and bills and wages paid in conjunction with the activities are noted. They levied property taxes for county purposes and could call for bond elections. The

members served as a board of equalization for county property assessments, after 1896 with the added authorization to refund taxes erroneously collected.

Responsibilities noted in the minutes include supervision of the conduct of all county, district and precinct officials, boards, and agencies. All personnel actions are recorded, by individual name, for county employees from janitor to auditor. Such actions include appointments and hourly or salaried wage increases. Requisition and bid proposals are similarly detailed covering everything from a single typewriter for the clerk's office to gravel for major road department construction. Both personnel allotments and departmental purchases form part of audits and annual budgets, although these are just a dollar value per category/department.

The commission created road districts, school districts, and sanitary districts, appointed superintendents of such districts, and maintained a salary fund. Names of individuals appointed as road supervisors or other county officials (e.g. collector, bee inspector, physician, pound keeper) are mentioned regularly. Laying out roads was a major activity noted in the minutes. In 1925, the commission was given similar authority over airplane landing fields and hangars, and discussion of the airport is common in the 1930s.

The commission was responsible for public health and safety. Reports from the county physician are regularly included. The minutes also record specific actions taken in the early 1920s regarding labor unrest at the mines in the county. Working of prisoners is mentioned. The commission was also responsible for any litigation involving the county. Construction of the county jail in 1898 and a new courthouse 1907#1910 are noted.

The legislature mandated that business licenses be obtained from the county commission for operation in unincorporated county areas; most applications were for liquor licenses. Business licensing information includes name, type of business, business location, and action taken on applications. Where the county had a more direct interest, detailed contracts are recorded, as in the cases of utility franchises, county leases of property or services, and cooperative agreements made with other governmental agencies or private corporations.

The commission created election precincts, Commissioners served as canvassers of elections also appointing election officers, setting the boundaries of voting districts, and assigning polling places. The legislature also provided for the county commission to approve the incorporation of towns.

The commissioners were to provide for the maintenance of the poor, insane, and orphans. Use of the pauper fund increases in the 1920s and 1930s. Such proceedings frequently include a brief discussion of the family's personal and financial circumstances as well as the county's determination of what relief to allow. Initially relief was individualized and often in the form of authorizing credit at a company store. By the late 1930s more organized welfare programs were added, including works projects and recreational facilities for "idle men". Adjustments on individual property tax assessments are itemized as are detailed resolutions concerning tax sales, by the late 1930s and early 1940s this often included houses from company towns. Entries recording the commission's role in tax abatement are common in the 1930s, noting the

tax amount and the description of the personal property or location of the real property involved.

**ARRANGEMENT:** The series is arranged chronologically by date of meeting. However filming affects how that arrangement appears here (see RESEARCH NOTE).

**RESEARCH NOTE:** Given the diversity and extent of the county commission's activities, the minute books should be consulted not only by researchers seeking information on the commission, but by those seeking information on any county agencies, their personnel, or their services to individuals; on private contractors and their plans for work on county projects or private subdivisions; on private businesses operating within the unincorporated county limits; and on private individuals or charitable institutions holding taxable or untaxable property within the county. Virtually any person living in, or any activity taking place in, unincorporated areas of Carbon county (up to and including the incorporation or disincorporation of municipalities) was affected by the activities of the county commission and is reflected in the minutes.

Filming on reels 2 through 6 is such that pairs of pages appear in reverse order. To read in chronological order, it may be easiest for the researcher to proceed directly to the end of a given reel and then read the entries while rewinding.

**RELATED RECORDS:** While the minute books summarize the meetings of the commission, many other county agencies recorded the particulars. Thus the other holdings of the county commission and other Carbon county agencies should be consulted.

**PROCESSING NOTE:** The Carbon County Clerk as secretary for the Carbon County Commission should be contacted for other holdings. Filming was begun in 1966. The series was processed by A.C. Cone in May 1995. Film was cut as necessary so that the index to volume 4 would appear before the volume rather than between volumes 5 and 6.

**GAPS IN THE SERIES:** Filming of volume 6 ends mid-volume. The existence of any filming done on the remainder of the volume is unknown.

## CONTAINER LIST

Reel	Description	Volume
1	1894, Jun	1
	4-1900, Dec 29	
2	Index; 1901, Jan	2
	3-1909, Jan 28	
2	Index; 1909, Feb 3	

<b>Reel</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Volume</b>
	25-1917, Jan 2	
3	Index	4
4	1917, Jan	4
	2-1922, Jan 20	
5	1922, Apr	4
	6-1926, Sep 7	
5	1926, Oct	5
	7-1936, Dec 22	
6	1937, Jan	6
	4-1945, Aug 7	